GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2707
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2016
Heavy School Bags
Kumar Shri Ashwini

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Academy of Pediatrics has suggested that children should not carry school bags weighting more than ten percent of their body weight to avoid long term health problems and if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether the said suggestions have been considered by the Government; and
(c) if so, the remedial measures/ proposed to be taken by the Government in the regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
(SMT. SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) to (c) No such suggestion has been received from the Indian Academy of Pediatrics. However, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) have already taken measures to reduce the weight of school bags. NCERT has not recommended any textbook for early childhood education. It has recommended only two books (Language and Mathematics) for classes I & II and three books for classes III to IV (Language, Environmental Studies and Mathematics). The number and size of NCERT's textbooks used by the primary and secondary school students are appropriate to their age. NCERT has also made available all their textbooks for free access through the web (epathshala.nic.in) and mobile devices. The collections include textbooks for all subjects across all the stages and made available for free download and dissemination. CBSE has directed schools affiliated to it to ensure that students do not carry school bags till class II and also to restrict the number of books to be prescribed in classes I-VIII. It has also issued a circular on 20.7.2015 to ensure that the parents are not forced to buy excessive number of textbooks. This issue was also discussed in the meeting of Central Advisory Board on Education held on 19th August, 2015 with the State Education Ministers, alongwith other stakeholders and requested States to take appropriate action.
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